

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

1-25 (canceled).

26 (new). A sheath having a radiopaque portion, the sheath comprising:

a sheath body, the sheath body having a distal end and including at least one longitudinally extending sheath score line running substantially along a length of the sheath body; and

a tearable radiopaque ring located at the distal end of the sheath body and abutting the sheath body, the radiopaque ring including at least one radiopaque ring score line along which the radiopaque ring may be broken,

wherein the at least one radiopaque ring score line is unfilled.

27 (new). The sheath according to claim 26, wherein the tearable radiopaque ring includes a sidewall having an interior and an exterior, and wherein the at least one radiopaque ring score line is located on the interior of the sidewall.

28 (new). The sheath according to claim 26, wherein the tearable radiopaque ring includes a sidewall having an interior and an exterior, and wherein the at least one radiopaque ring score line is located on the exterior of the sidewall.

29 (new). The sheath according to claim 26, wherein the tearable radiopaque ring is bonded to an inner wall of the sheath body.

30 (new). The sheath according to claim 26, wherein the at least one sheath score line is aligned with the at least one radiopaque ring score line.

31 (new). The sheath according to claim 26, wherein the tearable radiopaque ring comprises a contiguous radiopaque ring.

32 (new). The sheath according to claim 26, wherein the at least one radiopaque ring score line comprises at least one V-shaped notch.

33 (new). The sheath according to claim 26, wherein the at least one radiopaque ring score line comprises at least one U-shaped notch.

34 (new). The sheath according to claim 26, wherein the tearable radiopaque ring includes a sidewall and the at least one radiopaque ring score line comprises at least one region wherein a thickness of the sidewall is reduced.

35 (new). A method of manufacturing a sheath having a radiopaque portion, the method comprising:

- providing a sheath body having a distal end;

- forming at least one longitudinally extending sheath score line along a length of the sheath body;

- providing a radiopaque ring having at least one radiopaque ring score line along which the radiopaque ring may be broken by tearing; and

- bonding the radiopaque ring to the distal end of the sheath body without introducing polymer or binding agent into the at least one radiopaque ring score line.

36 (new). The method according to claim 35, further comprising the step of aligning the at least one radiopaque ring score line with the at least one sheath score line.

37 (new). The method according to claim 35, wherein the bonding step comprises thermally bonding the radiopaque ring to the distal end of the sheath body.

38 (new). The method according to claim 35, wherein the bonding step comprises sonically bonding the radiopaque ring to the distal end of the sheath body.

39 (new). The method according to claim 35, wherein the bonding step comprises chemically bonding the radiopaque ring to the distal end of the sheath body.

40 (new). The method according to claim 35, wherein the bonding step comprises bonding the radiopaque ring to an inner wall of the sheath body.

41 (new). The method according to claim 35, wherein the bonding step comprises embedding the radiopaque ring within the sheath body.

42 (new). A method of introducing a medical device into a patient, the method comprising:

providing an introducer sheath, the introducer sheath comprising:

a sheath body, the sheath body including at least one longitudinally extending sheath score line running substantially along a length of the sheath body; and
a radiopaque ring bonded to the sheath body, the radiopaque ring including at least one radiopaque ring score line along which the radiopaque ring may be broken;

introducing the introducer sheath into a patient's vasculature;

manipulating the introducer sheath through the patient's vasculature; and

breaking the sheath body and the radiopaque ring into two or more pieces by tearing.

43 (new). The method according to claim 42, wherein the breaking step comprises applying a tearing force to the sheath body, thereby splitting the sheath body and the radiopaque ring along the at least one longitudinally extending sheath score line and the at least one radiopaque ring score line, respectively.

44 (new). A sheath having a radiopaque portion, comprising:

a sheath body having a distal end and including at least one longitudinally extending sheath score line running substantially along a length of the sheath body; and

a contiguous radiopaque ring bonded to the distal end of the sheath body, the radiopaque ring including at least one radiopaque ring score line along which the radiopaque ring may be broken,

wherein the at least one radiopaque ring score line is free of polymer and binding agent.